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comforting than George Eliot's distant and invisible choir, "whose music is the sadness [it should read] of the world." But, religion apart, there is no good excuse for confounding ethics with genius, conscience with art, or—Mrs. Ward with George Eliot.

CHARLES TOWNSEND COPELAND.

TYPHUS FEVER.

ON FEBRUARY 11th of this year there came to my office in the morning mail four postal cards; each reported a separate case of typhoid fever in the house No. 42 East Twelfth Street, New York City. My attention was at once aroused by the exceedingly unusual fact of typhoid appearing in four persons in the same house on the same day. I asked Dr. F. H. Dillingham and Dr. Charles F. Roberts to go with me, and we together drove to the house indicated. Before we left it we had found not four, but fifteen well-developed cases of typhus fever, and in other houses, before the day had passed, forty-four additional cases were discovered. It was comparatively easy to trace these cases. The steamship "Massilia" had arrived in this port a few days before from Marseilles, France, having on board a number of Russian Hebrews, who, fleeing alike from the famine and the police of the Tsar, had sought refuge and liberty in this country. They had been helped on their way by the Hirsch Fund, and they were, for the most part, in charge, at the time we found the disease, of the officers of that charity.

The subsequent action of the Board of Health was that which experience has shown to be the best. Through the energy of President Charles G. Wilson of the Board ample accommodation for the patients we expected was secured at once on North Brother Island. Then came the work of fighting the disease. Additional inspectors were sworn in, and everything was made ready for a heavy siege. We did not dare to hope that the outbreak would stop there.

There are only two ways of fighting typhus fever. These are: 1st, Isolation of the sick and those exposed to the contagion; and, 2d, The destruction, or thorough disinfection, of all articles which may have come in contact with the sufferers.

It is not always necessary, however, to isolate those who have been merely exposed, but it is necessary to keep them under the strictest sanitary surveillance and to examine them daily. Persons who have a fixed habitation may be permitted to carry on their business provided the examination goes on. At the first symptom of the disease these people are of course isolated. Persons who live in lodging houses, taking their rooms by the night, here to-day and there to-morrow, should always be quarantined over the period of incubation. The importance to the Health Department of these periods of incubation in diseases may be understood by explaining them. The period of incubation is that time necessary after a person has contracted a disease before it shows itself actively. It is the time which the disease takes to hatch out, if I may so express myself. As it is believed that during the period of incubation a person suffering is not dangerous to others, and as towards the close of this period symptoms begin to show themselves, it enables the Department to isolate the sufferers before they become centres of infection.

In typhus fever the medical authorities on the disease place the period of incubation between one and twenty-one days. The experience of this Department would indicate that from nine to sixteen days is much nearer the actual time. After the expiration of the longer period we consider the suspect to be safe, although "to make assurance doubly sure" we continue the isolation, or the surveillance, until twenty-one days be passed.

In the case of these Russian Hebrews we were so far fortunate in the fact that they were among the immigrants assisted by the Hirsch Fund. This carried with it the conclusion that they were kept together for the most part. The disease broke out when the agents of the fund were looking for places for the immigrants. The coöperation of the United Hebrew Charities has been a very valuable aid to the Health Department.

To date (March 4th) there have been found 130 cases in New York City. Of these 106 were passengers on the "Massilia" and 24 were residents who caught the fever from the former. The disease has appeared in this city, Newburgh, Providence, R. I., Kinderhook, Oakdale, Mass., Pittsburg, and St. Louis. In Providence and Newburgh the sufferers were Italians; but of the two hundred and odd Italian immigrants on the "Massilia," only three have been found to have developed typhus. This is owing to their isolation from the Russians on board the steamer.

The disease is well under control. To date there have been seven deaths, and, calculating on the number of adults affected, the mortality is about 18 per cent. Of the sufferers about thirty per cent. were children, and it is known that children rarely have the disease in a severe form.

The parent outbreak of the disease took place in the famine districts in Russia, and the patients in whom the disease showed itself here were of those unfortunates who have been weakened by want in the dominions of the Tsar. It is impossible for me to persuade myself that this outbreak is the measure of the danger to the people of the United States from the Russian famine. The famine gives no sign as yet of abatement, nor so far as the published reports go may we believe that the Russian authorities have, up to the present time, perfected any adequate measures of relief. It is, in fact, a question whether relief can be afforded to sufferers so great in number and spread over such a vast extent of territory. If this be true, then the famine is destined to become greater, the sufferers more numerous, the misery more awful, and the resultant diseases of more terribly malignant type. If, once more, unrestricted immigration and imports be permitted to go on from a country under these conditions, then we are threatened by a very serious and real danger. "Near is my coat but nearer is my skin," runs the Spanish proverb, and while it may be our duty to welcome the oppressed, it is certainly true that our first duty is to our own people and our own homes.

We cannot say that the present danger is such that we should quarantine this country against Russian immigrants and articles of commerce. This extreme measure is not needed, with the knowledge we now have of guarding against the immigration of disease. But it is plainly necessary that we should class all Russians and Russian goods as suspects and should treat them accordingly. Articles of commerce coming from Russian ports should be thoroughly disinfected, and all immigrants from infected districts in that country should be isolated on their arrival and carefully watched until the period of incubation be passed.

There is no cause for alarm, much less for panic, but there is abundant cause for careful, thorough, and scientific supervision and watchfulness.

With these we shall be perfectly safe, for with disease as an immigrant it is true that forewarned is forearmed in this day and generation.

CYRUS EDSON.

THE FROST CURE.

IT HAS often been observed that great truths are not revealed till Time has prepared the way for their reception ; still it is a curious fact that nearly all the most important steps in the progress of science were half-anticipated by men apparently unconscious of having approached the threshold of a world-changing discovery.

In the morning twilight of the Christian Middle Ages, America was visited twice, and, if we shall believe Professor Karsen, at least three times, by adventurous sea-rovers who hardly thought it worth while to report their skirmishes with the natives of a wild forest-land. Before the end of the eleventh century, printing-presses were used in China for the multiplication of pictures, though not of books ; and about the same time the Mongol invaders of Eastern Europe increased the terror of their arms by means of machines described as "brass tubes, belching forth fire with great noise," but which were certainly not used to discharge balls. Pythagoras vaguely outlines all the essential principles of a system which only two thousand years later was rediscovered by Keppler and Copernicus.

In Turkey the inoculation cure of cutaneous diseases was occasionally practised two centuries before the time of Dr. Jenner, but future generations may consider it a much stranger fact that the nineteenth century more than once so closely approached the discovery of the *Frost Cure*. For medical statistics, read aright, might even now make it doubtful if smallpox, cholera, and yellow fever combined have proved half as destructive of human life as a delusion which a hygienic reformer describes as the "Cold Fallacy,"—the habit of ascribing all sorts of ailments to the influence of a low temperature. The air of the outdoor world, of the woods and hills, he says, is, *par excellence*, a product of nature, and, therefore, the presumptive cause of innumerable evils. Cold air has become the general scapegoat of sinners against nature. When Don Juan's knee-joints begin to weaken he suspects himself of having "taken cold." If an old glutton has a cramp in the stomach, he ascribes it to an incautious exposure on coming home from a late supper. Toothache is supposed to result from "draughts;" croup, neuralgia, mumps, etc., from the "raw March wind." When children have been forced to sleep in unventilated bedrooms till their lungs putrefy with their own exhalations, the *mater-familias* reproaches herself with the most sensible thing she has been doing for the last hundred nights—"opening the windows last August, when the air was so stifling."

Even old-school physicians begin to suspect that "the danger of cold air currents has been greatly overrated;" but what if the demon of popular delusion should turn out to be not only a harmless sprite, but a minister of mercy—the most harmless as well as the most powerful disinfectant, and Nature's panacea for the disorders of the human organism ?

Is Time "preparing the way" for that truth by half-way discoveries ?

Priessnitz, the founder of hydropathy, managed to cure obstinate cases of dyspepsia by cold shower-baths ; but it is highly probable that the same purpose could be attained, in a more natural and much less disagreeable manner, by the inhalation of fresh, cold air.